

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

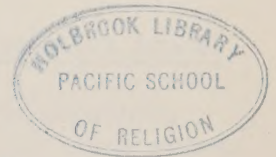
Annual Subscription: \$3.00

17, ROUTE DE MALAGNOU, GENEVA

297 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10

Tel.: GRamercy 5-3475 — Cable Address: "Worcil"

Printed in the U. S. A.



under the auspices of

the WORLD COUNCIL of CHURCHES (in process of formation)
the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 17

Fifteenth Year

April 30, 1948

Amsterdam Special

Assembly Visits Utrecht.-

On Sunday afternoon, August 29, the Assembly will go by special train to Utrecht. It was in Utrecht in 1938 that eighty church leaders met to consider plans for the formation of the World Council of Churches. The 1937 Conferences of Faith and Order at Edinburgh, and Life and Work at Oxford, had agreed that it was time that a World Council of Churches should come into being, merging these two movements. The Utrecht meeting was the result. It was here that this large committee adopted a proposed constitution for the new organisation. A provisional Committee of Fourteen, and a General Secretary were appointed, both of which have served since that time.

The "Old Catholic Church" at Utrecht will be the hosts to the Assembly on this occasion. The delegates will be received by Archbishop Rinkel, of the Old Catholic diocese of Utrecht, which has been autonomous since the Jansenist controversies in 1724. A musical programme will be presented. Following the musical programme, a reception will be given by the Bishops.

Utrecht is an old city with a population of approximately 170,000. It is renowned for its beautiful Cathedral the "Dom", the building of which began in the year 1254. This city is a well known University centre. It is also the residence of the Cardinal Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church.

Archbishop Eidem of Sweden and one of the five Presidents comments on the coming Assembly.-

"The work of the World Council of Churches is a blessed adventure of Christian faith and hope and love. In this time it is more necessary than ever that we all confess our faith in a heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ our Lord and stand together. The promises of our God and Saviour kindle in us a joyful hope that we may come nearer to each other. And the love of Christ constraineth us to love each other and bear a common witness to our common Father and our common Saviour. With confidence I look forward to the great Assembly at Amsterdam. If we are humble enough I am sure that God will give His blessing to this institution of World Council of Churches."

E.P.S.Geneva

CHINACan Missions Still Work in Communist Areas?

The Church of Christ in China, in which 15 denominations work together, issues a periodical called "The Church". Its February number, which has just reached Geneva, - contains an article on the experiences of Christians in Communist Territory confirming what has already been published by E.P.S. (see No. 11 and 14).

"As with other aspects of economic and political life in China, says the article, "conditions vary considerably in different parts of Communist China. However, as the evidence accumulates it can be said that usually Christian institutions are not able to function". In most cases public worship and even family worship is not allowed. "There is frequently definite opposition to the profession and practice of the Christian religion as such. There is always opposition to any kind of organisation or group fellowship which is not subservient to the Communist government. In general, it would seem that the areas which have been longest under Communist control are the places in which organised Christianity has been stamped out. There are numerous proved cases where Christians have been tortured and sometimes killed because of their loyalty to the Christian faith, even where the persons concerned have had no connection with any political party or movement.

"What should the Church do under these circumstances? The immediate and clear duty of Christians who are not in Communist areas is to give every material assistance which can be rendered to Christian refugees from Communist areas. This is being done on a large scale. Christian workers are being given an opportunity for refresher courses in seminaries and Bible schools and where possible, are being transferred to work in more peaceful parts of the country.

"But the challenge of vast areas in China which are at present closed to Christian missionaries is constantly in the minds of Chinese and other Christians, especially those in responsible administrative positions. In our day in China, we constantly hear of Christian martyrs who have suffered or died for their faith. At the present time, as in other periods of Christian history, the Church cannot order or assign fellow Christians to attempt work in Communist areas. However, the Church can and does challenge your Christians to attempt the seemingly impossible task of Christian witness in Communist China. It would appear that the only chance for Christians to live and work in Communist territories is that they should earn their living by some trade or profession which the Communist authority recognises and values for its own sake. The task is full of danger and may mean suffering and death. But as in the past, it is challenge of this kind which has appealed to venturesome spirits, entirely dedicated to the will of God."

E.P.S. Geneva

Two New Groups of Refugees

Two new groups of refugees - one in Greece and the other in Palestine - have received emergency aid through the World Council of Churches.

A sum of \$2,000 has been granted by the World Council of Churches' Refugee Commission to assist a number of Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem, who, according to an urgent appeal, are suffering and in danger as a result of present Arab-Jewish

CHINA

Can Missions Still Work in Communist Areas?

The Church of Christ in China, in which 15 denominations work together, issues a periodical called "The Church". The February number, which has just reached Geneva, contains an article on the experience of Christians in Communist territory containing what has already been published by E.P.C. (see No. II and IV).

"As with other aspects of economic and political life in China, says the article, 'conditions vary considerably in different parts of Communist China. However, as the evidence accumulates it can be said that nearly everywhere conditions are not what they were before'. In most cases public worship and even family worship is not allowed. 'There is frequently hostile opposition to the profession and practice of the Christian religion as such. There is always opposition to any kind of organization or group fellowship which is not subservient to the Communist government. In general, it would seem that the areas which have been longest under Communist control are the places in which organized Christianity has been stamped out. There are numerous places where Christians have been tortured and sometimes killed because of their loyalty to the Christian faith, even where the persons concerned had no connection with any political party or movement.

"What would be the effect of such conditions on the Christian Church? The immediate and long-range effects are not yet known. It is clear that the Christian Church in China is being forced to work in some pastoral parts of the country. This is being done on a large scale. The workers are being given an opportunity for rest and relaxation in the mountains and in the schools and in the country. They are being encouraged to work in some pastoral parts of the country.

"But the conditions of work in China which are at present closest to Christian mission are constantly in the minds of Chinese and other Christians. Especially those in responsible administrative positions. In one day in China we constantly hear of Christian workers who have suffered or died in their faith. At the present time, in other parts of China, the Church is being stamped out. The Church is being stamped out in Communist areas. However, the Church can and does maintain some Christian workers in Communist areas. It would seem that the only chance for Christians to live and work in Communist territory is that they should care their living by some trade or profession which the Communist authorities recognize and value for its own sake. The task is full of danger and very hard. But as in the past, it is a challenge of the kind which has appealed to generations of Christians, courageously and selflessly, to the will of God."

Two New Groups of Refugees
Two new groups of refugees - one in Greece and the other in Palestine - have received sanctuary aid through the World Council of Churches.

warfare. A grant of \$1,000, made available to the World Council's Reconstruction Department by its Refugee Division has been sent to Greece to purchase emergency food supplies for persons made homeless by civil war in northern Greece.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Religious Bodies Joint Forces to Help D.P.s

The main religious bodies in America have been straining every sinew this Spring to ease the plight of the Displaced Persons in Europe.

A major development is the formation of a Joint Council on the Resettlement of Displaced Persons by the Church World Service Committee on DPs, representing the Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Churches, and the comparable Jewish and Roman Catholic agencies.

The Joint Council was set up by these bodies to coordinate their programmes in preparation for the increased immigration which would result from the passage of emergency legislation now before Congress. Spokesmen for all three agencies call the Council the "best example of interconfessional action in welfare work ever undertaken in the United States".

E.P.S. Geneva

Call of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation
to the World Council of Churches

The regional conference of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation held at Amsterdam from March 30 to April 2, 1948 has passed the following resolution, addressed to the World Council of Churches and the Assembly of the World Council at Amsterdam:

"The regional conference of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation assembled in Amsterdam, convinced of the world's mental, moral, social-economic and political need, suggests with serious conviction to your Assembly that the Churches when considering the big world problems (we think here in the first place of America, Russia, Germany, and the atom war) should speak in an anti-capitalistic, anti-imperialistic, anti-totalitarian and anti-militaristic spirit, with the object of establishing a new order based on economic solidarity and national and international justice as well as on recognition of human rights; and which lays in this way the foundation of an international permanent order of justice.

"This prophetic service is expected in these times from Churches naming themselves after Jesus Christ. This service has not only to be put into words. The Christian Churches have to ask from their members deeds, to show a constructive revolutionary service to the world and to the leaders in the economic and political domains.

May the Church not again be unfaithful to her mission. The Church is called to serve the cause of reconciliation. We are sure that such a message from the Church would mean a real release to our world tormented at it is by fear."

E.P.S. Geneva

"The Condition of the Protestants in Spain"

The Ecumenical Press Service (No. 4) has recently quoted Roman Catholic statements in favour of religious freedom in Spain. It is regrettable to find that in times when the question of the rights of man is of such cardinal importance, other Roman Catholic voices still speak the language of intolerance.

Father F. Cavalli, S.J., has written for the Italian Jesuit review "La Civiltà Cattolica" (April 3, 1948) an article entitled "The Condition of the Protestants in Spain", from which we quote the following extracts:

"The Catholic Church, being convinced, by reason of her divine prerogatives, that she is the one true Church, claims for herself alone the right to freedom, for this right may only be possessed by truth, and never by error. Where the other religions are concerned, she will not take up the sword against them, but she will ask that, by lawful means worthy of the human creature, they shall not be allowed to propagate false doctrines. Consequently, in a State where the majority of the people are Catholic, the Church asks that error shall not be accorded a legal existence, and that if religious minorities exist they shall have a de facto existence only, not the opportunity of spreading their beliefs. Where material circumstances - whether the hostility of a Government or the numerical strength of the Dissenting factions - do not allow of this principle's being applied in its entirety, the Church requires that she shall have all possible concessions, confining herself to accepting as the least of all evils the de jure toleration of other forms of worship. In other countries, the Catholics are obliged themselves to ask for full liberty for all, resigning themselves to living together where they alone had the right to live. The Church does not in this way give up her theses, which remains the most imperative of all laws, but adapts herself to the hypothesis, which must be taken into account on the material plane. Hence extreme horror on the part of the Protestants, who hold it up against the Catholics that they withhold freedom, indeed de facto toleration, from others when they are in the majority, and on the other hand demand it as a right when they are in the minority...

"The Catholic Church would be betraying her mission if she were to proclaim, either in theory or in practice, that error can have the same rights as truth, especially when the highest duties and interests of man are at stake. The Church can feel no shame at her intransigence as she asserts it in principle and carries it out in practice, though the areopagus of the nations of today may smile pityingly or rage against it as tyrannical..." E.P.S. Geneva

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Hungarian Language Banned from Church

An official decree has been made in Slovakia forbidding the use of the Hungarian language in the services of the Church. This will be a distinct hardship to many ministers and members of congregations who only speak Hungarian. Representations have already been made by church leaders in Czechoslovakia against the carrying out of this decree and urging that it be cancelled. E.P.S. Geneva

INDONESIABishop Neill Meets Indonesian and Dutch Leaders

On the occasion of Bishop Stephen Neill's visit to Indonesia a reception was held at the Missions Consulate in Batavia. Among those present were the Lieutenant General, the Resident of the delegation of the Republic of Indonesia, members of the Provisional Government and of the Commission of the United Nations and leaders of the Protestant Church of Indonesia, of the East-Indonesian and Javanese Churches.

Bishop Neill lectured in Batavia on "The Chances of Peace" and visited also Macassar and Bali. E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYVisit to Refugee Camps

The Executive Secretary of the Refugee Commission of the World Council of Churches, Rev. Elfan Rees, visited refugee camps and shelters in the British Zone, especially in Schleswig-Holstein, accompanied by Dr Heinz Kloppenburg of the Refugee Commission who supervises the refugees in Germany.

In Bielefeld, Lübeck and Rendsburg they visited the leading officers of the "Hilfswerk" of the Evangelical Church in Germany. In Flensburg the visitors followed an invitation of the Danish-South Schleswfi Union. They also visited the island of Sylt.

The total number of refugees in Europe is at present about 15 million. Of these, 930,000 Displaced Persons are in Germany and Austria. The number of "Volksdeutsche" (of German ethnical origin) is 3,500,000. In addition, there are 9,500,000 refugees and expellees from eastern provinces of Germany. The percentage of the refugees in comparison with the total population of Schleswig-Holstein is 46, i.e. almost to each native one refugee. On the island of Sylt, almost 7,000 families of former members of the Wehrmach and also about 8,000 refugees are living with 7,000 inhabitants (i.e. three refugees to one native). In Flensburg there are 2 refugees to 3 inhabitants.

The decisive impression gained on the trip is that on the one hand now as before the room conditions are intolerable when arranging accomodation of families. There are cases where in one single room 10 persons must sleep in 5 beds and live. On the other hand, the untiring efforts of the Christian Churches in Germany have achieved that a great number of people have been saved from perishing, and by means of self-aid have accomplished overwhelming results. The visitors also inspected an orphanage as well as an emergency dwelling which were most exemplary. A good deal of assistance on behalf of foreign Churches is still necessary. It was especially noticed on this trip that the assistance given is no charity, but that it helps to give desperate people a new start. The total need of the refugees and expellees will only then be relieved when economy in Germany is restored. The questions concerning living space, finding a definite place of work, care for the aged, care for the destitute, are still difficult problems, the solution of which is only possible if all Churches make a common effort.

The ordinances of the Westphalian Church authorities were mentioned as a very important sign. According to these ordinances, each church community in its

district to provide a house for refugees out of its own means so as to make a start. This does not solve the problem, but it is a courageous start which is worth consideration and further help by other Churches. E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAINAmsterdam Delegates Confer with British Council of Churches

Delegates appointed to represent the Churches of Great Britain at the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches were invited to attend special sessions of the spring meetings of the British Council of Churches in April. The delegates were given an insight into the history of the ecumenical movement, the basis, constitution and membership of the World Council of Churches, and the study preparations on the theme of the Assembly "Man's Disorder and God's Design". The speakers included the Archbishop of Canterbury, one of the five presidents of the World Council of Churches, the Bishop of Chichester, Dr J.H. Oldham, the Rev. Oliver S. Tomkins, Mr. Kenneth G. Grubb and the Rev. E.C. Urwin.

A service of dedication and prayer was held in St Martin's in the Fields.

The welfare of men and women in the British Army and the educational, social and moral issues raised by the National Service Act, occupied much of the time of the Council at the business sessions. A recommendation that courses of training for youth leaders in the preparation of young people for national service be initiated by the Churches and voluntary organisations, was put forward by the executive committee of the Youth Department.

A motion calling upon the Council to communicate to its member Churches the need to increase the number and quality of Chaplains and voluntary workers, was passed unanimously after the Rev. Geoffrey P. Druitt, assistant chaplain general, British Army of the Rhine, who came over from Germany to address the Council, had made an urgent and moving appeal. He described courses for officers which had been recently held at three Church Houses in Germany, and said that if only they had the man-power to follow them up they could change conscription from a national tragedy into the greatest opportunity the Churches have ever had.

Presenting his first report as general secretary, the Rev. R.D. Say said that the British Council of Churches, although overburdened and understaffed, was becoming established in the confidence of the Churches. He referred in particular to the work for German Prisoners of War and their pastors in Britain, the interchange of preachers with America, the courses of study arranged for German youth leaders who visited Britain for a month, the preparation of a report on United Evangelism, and the preparation of a document on Significant Trends in British Theology, which was specially commended to the members of the British delegation to the Amsterdam Assembly.

Other business matters included a progress report on Christian Reconstruction in Europe, an eloquent appeal on behalf of refugees and displaced persons by the Rev. Henry Carter, chairman of the World Council of Churches Refugee Commission. The Council also reaffirmed its conviction of the importance of the proposed Covenant and Declaration on Human Rights now under consideration by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. E.P.S. Geneva

